

Rewald's sentence

Given the feelings involved, there may be differing views over the sentence meted out yesterday to phony investment man Ronald Rewald. For sure, few will feel it was too strong, with his conviction on 94 counts of bilking \$22 million from investors, some of them poor and relatively helpless.

In any event, it was appropriate that in his sentencing U.S. District Judge Harold Fong singled out the defrauding of certain investors for the longer sentences. Among those investors were a woman dying of cancer, several widows including one whose husband and son were killed in a plane crash, and a blind person.

Sympathy for Rewald in this case is hardly appropriate, except to the extent he seems to be a pathological liar incapable of telling the truth or fully appreciating the misery and hardship his classic swindle operation brought to hundreds of people.

It has been a case with ironies, including how the Central Intelligence Agency got used by this con man whose operations it sought to employ only for "light commercial cover."

But it also may be that Rewald outsmarted himself in the end. For his long defensive maneuvering on grounds he was only following CIA orders when he took and spent investors' money on a lavish lifestyle probably resulted in more detailed and tougher treatment.

He would have been better off pleading guilty in a case where his guilt was so clear.

